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Leza L Olson 11/30/2006 01:22:47 PM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

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Text:

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 04679

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INFO: POL DAO DCM AMB

DISSEMINATION: PD  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PAO:HKFINN  
DRAFTED: PD:MKONSTANTYN  
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7909  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 1291  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 8054  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 1142  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2052  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 1271  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 8959  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 1993  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 8916  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 9360  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 6036  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 3414  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 8291  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 2528  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4435  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 5201  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 TEL AVIV 004679

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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL

PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Mideast

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Key stories in the media:  
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All media reported that President Bush arrived in Jordan on Wednesday. Israel Radio reported that the President had breakfast with Iraqi PM Nuri Al-Maliki in Amman this morning. The radio reported that Bush met last night with Jordan's King Abdullah II. Israel Radio cited a statement issued by the Royal Jordanian Court according to which Abdullah asked Bush to assist the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian talks. The station reported that the President reaffirmed his "two-nations, two-states" vision. Israel Radio reported that President Bush called for strengthening Abbas and quoted Bush as saying that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essential for bolstering regional stability.

Israel Radio reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is meeting with PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas in Jericho and will meet with PM Ehud Olmert and FM Tzipi Livni in Jerusalem. The radio said that Abbas is expected to ask the Secretary to make use of the opportunity presented by the period of calm ("tahdiya") to promote Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Israel Radio quoted Abbas associate Yasser Abed Rabbo as saying that the Palestinian will tell Rice that they are willing to treat Olmert's diplomatic initiative in earnest. The radio quoted Palestinian PM Ismail Haniyeh as saying that the Palestinians expect five million refugees to return and that this is their sacred right that no one can renounce. Israel Radio reported that Olmert is expected to tell the Secretary that Israel will continue to abide by the cease-fire and release Palestinian prisoners if kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit is freed. Yediot (Shimon Shiffer) expects Rice to ask Olmert whether he has the political wherewithal to hold negotiations with the Palestinians that would eventually entail the evacuation of many West Bank settlements. Ha'aretz quoted Jerusalem sources as saying that Secretary Rice will ask Olmert to help Abbas by alleviating the

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siege on the Gaza Strip and removing non-essential roadblocks in the West Bank. Ha'aretz quoted Palestinian sources as saying that Rice is expected to ask Abbas and Israel to expand the cease-fire to the West Bank. Ha'aretz wrote that they will also discuss implementing the border passes agreement that was signed by the US, Israel, and the PA after Israel's pullout from Gaza. Ha'aretz reported that an extremely critical report written by the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs in the Territories is to be released before Rice's visit. The report, a copy of which has reached Ha'aretz, accuses Israel of violating every single clause of the border passes agreement.

All media reported that Israel released Palestinian Public Works and Housing Minister Abdel-Rahman Zidan on Wednesday.

Major media quoted Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman as saying on Wednesday that the Shalit affair will be over soon. Maariv quoted Suleiman as saying that the Israeli-Palestinian deal will be carried out in three weeks. However, The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli and Palestinian sources as saying that Suleiman was unable, during his visit to Tel Aviv on Wednesday, to bridge the gaps between Israel and the Palestinians regarding the identity or numbers of prisoners to be released in exchange for Shalit or the timing of a swap. Maariv quoted senior Israeli sources involved in the negotiations that Israel will release 500 Palestinian prisoners, including some who "have blood on their hands." The Jerusalem Post's web site cited the London-based newspaper Al-Hayat as saying that Hamas announced this morning that West Bank Tanzim leader

Marwan Barghouti would be at the top of the list of security prisoners they want released in exchange for Shalit.

Ha'aretz reported that the UN has started work on mapping the Sheba Farms area along Israel's northern border, using available maps and satellite photographs. The disputed territory, or parts of it, is claimed by Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Maariv quoted French President Jacques Chirac as saying at the NATO Summit in Riga on Wednesday that Hizbullah is a moderating force in Lebanon. Electronic media reported that Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah urged Lebanese citizens to demonstrate against the Siniora government.

Maariv and Yediot reported that tests of the Sky Shield system recently conducted in the US were successful. The system, which is manufactured by Lockheed Martin, is supposedly capable of intercepting and destroying Qassam and Katyusha rockets. Maariv wrote that various branches of Israel's defense industries are also trying to find a response to the rocket threat. The Jerusalem Post quoted a high-ranking IDF officer as saying on Wednesday that the IDF plans to purchase and install Trophy active protection anti-missile systems on its Merkava tanks by the end of 2007. Maariv reported that a state-of-the-art computerized baggage screening system recently installed at Ben-Gurion Airport has proven ineffective.

Israel Radio reported on several violent incidents and 34 arrests of Palestinians in the West Bank. Israel Radio reported that Minister for Strategic Affairs Avigdor Lieberman will travel to Washington next week and meet with Secretary Rice and National Intelligence Director Negroponte.

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Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post reported that Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu has been named to head a UN fact-finding mission to the Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanun, where 19 civilians were killed by an Israeli artillery barrage earlier this month. The Jerusalem Post quoted the President of the UN Human Rights Council, Luis Alfonso De Alba, as saying that Tutu will travel to Gaza to "assess the situation of victims, address the needs of survivors, and make recommendations on ways and means to protect Palestinian civilians against further Israeli assaults."

Leading media reported that in an open letter to the American people, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad questions the US aid to Israel. Maariv reported that the Jewish Agency has recently decided to set up a Farsi-language hotline for Iranian Jews interested in immigrating to Israel.

Ha'aretz reported that on Wednesday the Meretz party asked AG Menachem Mazuz to prevent a legislation proposal extending the time span of, and amending, the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law. Meretz, which said that the proposal is anti-constitutional and discriminatory, warned that it would turn to the High Court of Justice if its demand was not met.

All media reported that on Wednesday the cabinet and the Knesset approved the appointment of Tzipi Livni to the post of justice minister in place of Construction and Housing Minister Meir Sheetrit. She will also continue her role as Foreign Minister.

Maariv reported that the Israeli Council on Foreign Relations, which is presided by David Kimche, will today present the first issue of The Jerusalem Review, a new magazine devoted to foreign policy issues of Israel and the Jewish people.

Israel Radio reported that the general strike in the public sector ended at 06:00 today following a ruling by the President of the National Labor Court last night. Leading electronic media reported on the gradual resumption of air traffic through Ben-Gurion Airport.

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Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Even those who are hoping for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the figure of [former Secretary of State James] Baker, the father of the Madrid conference and the 'comprehensive solution,' can expect disappointment."

Block Quotes:

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"Position Papers and Fighting Spirit"

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (11/30): "After six years during which the [US] administration has focused on the 'isolation' of its foes, the new key word is 'engagement.' The question is how much engagement is needed and where. [Robert] Malley, [who was a key US mediator during the Clinton administration], believes that the United States should conduct a dialogue with Syria, but the public hints the heads of the administration have been sending to the committee in recent days are quite clear: The US does not see the Syrian regime as a worthy interlocutor. Baker and Hamilton would do well to stay away from this track, which looks like a dead end. Thus, even those who are hoping for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the figure of [James] Baker, the father of the Madrid conference and the 'comprehensive solution,' can expect disappointment."

JONES